

The Asia Foundation
Strengthening Advocacy and Local Government Accountability
CA No. 367-A-00-01-00130-00

PROGRESS REPORT
January - March 2002

Summary of Program Activities in Current Reporting Period:

- **Curriculum development**
- **Staff recruitment and field office establishment**
- **Preliminary survey**
- **Finance and compliance workshop**
- **Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings**
- **Revised Workplan submission**
- **Revised Project Monitoring Plan (PMP) submission**
- **Selection of Master Trainers**

Curriculum development

Pro Public and INSEC began work on their respective training curricula in January. Pro Public is responsible for materials related to forest and water user groups, as well as crosscutting materials on advocacy and good governance that will be used by all groups. INSEC is responsible for materials related to women's issues, and for tailoring the crosscutting materials on advocacy and good governance to fit the women's curriculum. All curriculum-related materials will be reviewed and finalized by the end of May.

Staff recruitment and field office establishment

During this quarter, both INSEC and Pro Public selected and trained all of their central and field level project staff. INSEC selected a Project Coordinator, Project Officer, and Accountant by mid-December, and District Field Officers, Social Mobilizers, and Office Assistants by mid-February. Pro Public selected a Project Coordinator, Project Officer, and Accountant by January, and District Field Officers, Social Mobilizers, and Office Assistants by mid-March. All recruitment was done through advertisement in local and national newspapers, and subsequent interviews at district and central levels. Staff training programs were conducted in March.

As agreed in the first quarter, INSEC and Pro Public opened separate field offices in each of the four program districts in December and March, respectively. Coordination between the two partners at the field-office level is slowly increasing.

Preliminary survey

Participatory preliminary surveys were conducted to identify project VDCs and lead groups. INSEC conducted its survey in February, while Pro Public will complete its survey in April. The surveys serve as a preliminary needs assessment of the lead groups, and will assist in finalization of the training curriculum.

Finance and compliance Workshop

The Foundation conducted a half-day Finance and Compliance Workshop for partners of both its Advocacy and Trafficking projects on February 18. The purpose of the

workshop was to familiarize project staff with USAID and Asia Foundation financial and grant management policies and procedures.

Program Steering Committee (PSC) meetings

Two PSC meetings were held at the Foundation during the reporting period. The first, in mid-March, focused on curriculum development and coordination, and the need to share the general curriculum. The partners agreed that INSEC would further customize the general curriculum developed by Pro Public to suit its target group and objectives. The partners agreed to share information on the selection of VDCs and lead groups so as to avoid duplication. Improved and regular modes of communication (mainly e-mail) were also discussed.

The second meeting was held in early April. In addition to the two main implementing partners and the Foundation, representatives from USAID and Forest Action attended. The objectives of the meeting were to review progress to date and discuss challenges, to explore ways to improve coordination, and to introduce Forest Action and its anticipated role in the project. Partners agreed to hold PSC meetings more frequently, and to hold monthly coordination meetings at the field level. The group discussed Forest Action's proposed role to help build capacity in self-monitoring and learning, document best practices, and strengthen implementation of select activities.

The third PSC meeting is planned for April 30, hosted by INSEC.

Revised Workplan submission

The revised workplan was submitted to USAID on March 18 reflecting changes in the timeline. Some field-level activities were rescheduled according to priority and feasibility.

Revised PMP submission

A revised PMP was submitted to USAID on March 20. The revision anticipates the addition of Forest Action as a partner, outlining its responsibility, in partnership with the other two implementing partners, for data sourcing and collection. Also added at the goal level is "analysis of advocacy action," for which Forest Action will be responsible.

Selection of Master Trainers

INSEC selected the required eight Master Trainers in March. Pro Public will complete selection by the first week of May. All Master Trainers will be recruited well before the finalization of training materials.

Issues and Challenges during the period:

Revised training materials

Instead of developing separate sets of reference materials for water and forest resources, Pro Public will combine the two materials into one set. This will help to reduce training time and material expenses.